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EXAMINER

PRAKASAM, RAMYA G

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3651

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-10, and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Abraham (U.S. Patent No. 5,431,271).

Abraham discloses a device for indicating a direction of movement of a passenger conveyor (24), comprising:

- A display (42) that is adapted to be placed beneath a handrail near a landing at one end of the conveyor such that the display is visible to an individual approaching the end of the conveyor (See Figure 1).
- Wherein the display includes a display screen (52) supported on a surface (42) that is at least partially at an oblique angle relative to the landing when the display is placed beneath the handrail (See Figures 1 and 2).
- Wherein the display comprises an electronic display panel (See Column 3, lines 28-32).
- Wherein the display is lighted (See Column 3, lines 22-25).
- Wherein the display comprises a liquid crystal display panel (See Column 3, lines 28-32).

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- ❑ A controller that controls an indicator on the display and wherein the controller automatically sets the indicator to correspond to a direction of movement of the conveyor (See Column 3, lines 32-37 and lines 44-47).
- ❑ Wherein the controller uses information regarding a direction of movement of a motor of the conveyor to determine the corresponding indicator (See Column 3, lines 44-47).
- ❑ Including a handrail entry module having a generally vertical portion that has an opening through which the handrail passes (See Figure 1) and a support surface extending generally down and away from the vertical portion and wherein the display is positioned on the support surface (See Figures 1 and 2).
- ❑ Wherein the support surface is curved (See Figure 2).

Abraham further discloses a passenger conveyor, comprising:

- ❑ A plurality of steps that move along a selected path between two landings (See Column 2, lines 32-36);
- ❑ A handrail (12) that moves with the steps;
- ❑ At least one support surface (42) positioned beneath the handrail near a corresponding one of the landings (See Figure 1); and
- ❑ A display (42) associated with the support surface such that the display is visible to an individual approaching the landing, the display providing an indication of a direction of movement of steps (See Figure 2 and Column 3, lines 32-37).

- ❑ Wherein the support surface is at least partially at an oblique angle relative to the landing (See Figure 2) and the display is supported on the surface (See Figures 1 and 2).
- ❑ A handrail entry module that includes a generally vertical portion that has an opening through which the handrail passes (See Figure 1) and wherein the support surface extends generally down and away from the vertical portion and wherein the display is positioned on the support surface (See Figures 1 and 2).
- ❑ Wherein the support surface is curved (See Figure 2).
- ❑ Wherein the display comprises an electrically powered indicator (See Column 3, lines 28-32).
- ❑ Wherein the display is selectively at least partially lit to provide the indication of the direction of step movement (See Column 3, lines 22-42).
- ❑ Wherein the display comprises a liquid crystal display panel (See Column 3, lines 28-32).
- ❑ A controller that controls the indication on the display and wherein the controller automatically sets the indication to correspond to a direction of movement of the steps (See Column 3, lines 32-37 and lines 44-47).
- ❑ A machine that propels the steps in a selected direction and wherein the controller uses information regarding operation of the machine to determine the corresponding indication (See Column 3, lines 47-60).
- ❑ Wherein the controller controls operation of the machine and the display (See Column 3, lines 47-60).

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abraham in view of Saito (U.S. Patent No. 4,798,274).

Abraham discloses all claimed limitations, including a handrail on each side of the steps (See Column 2, lines 32-36). Abraham, however, fails to expressly disclose a passenger conveyor including a display beneath each handrail near each landing. Saito discloses a display (181 – E, See Figures 1 and 4) for the purpose of providing a passenger conveyor that is easy to get on and get off, and further improve safety (See Column 5, lines 35-44). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify Abraham by utilizing a passenger conveyor including a display beneath each handrail near each landing for the purpose of providing a passenger conveyor that is easy to get on and get off, and further improve safety.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ramya G. Prakasam whose telephone number is (571) 272-6011. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday, 8:30am-7pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Crawford can be reached on (571) 272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

09/27/2006
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